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SUBJECT: LUXEMBOURG ARMY WANTS TO CREATE UNITS FOR
INTERNATIONAL DUTY

¶1. The Government of Luxembourg will soon ask its parliament to approve reforms that will make it easier for troops to serve in NATO and EU missions outside the Grand Duchy. Minister of Defense Jean-Louis Schiltz outlined the proposal at a January 17 swearing-in ceremony for 39 new enlistees. The reforms will go to parliament in April, according to Schiltz.

¶2. The reforms will include creation of self-contained "operational availability units" that can be used in NATO and EU missions abroad. Luxembourg has an all-volunteer army and the new units will be made up of soldiers who have also volunteered for duty outside of Luxembourg. At present, individual soldiers must volunteer for duty abroad before their units can be built and deployed. Schiltz said the new system will extend enlistments from 18 to 36 months, allowing for 12-months of pre-deployment training. He said that soldiers volunteering for international missions would receive higher pay and service awards.

¶3. Comment: If approved by parliament, the reforms should streamline Luxembourg's ability to plan for deployments to Afghanistan and elsewhere. It is not clear whether the changes will ultimately allow Luxembourg to increase the number of its troops serving abroad. Post will follow developments closely.

WAGNER